

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Pursuant to Section 19.84 Wis. Stats., a regular meeting of the **Brown County Public Safety Committee** was held on Wednesday, December 5, 2012 in Room 200 of the Northern Building, 305 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

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**Present:** Chair Buckley, Supervisor Clancy, Supervisor Nicholson, Supervisor Zima, Supervisor Carpenter  
**Also Present:** John Gossage, Cullen Peltier, Tom Miller, Todd Delain, Kim Pansier, Larry Lasee, Jim Hermans, Scott Shackelford, Supervisor De Wane, Supervisor Robinson, Don Hein, Brent Miller, Troy Streckenbach

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**I. Call meeting to order.**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Pat Buckley at 5:30 p.m.

**II. Approve/Modify Agenda.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to take Public Safety Communications after the Sheriff's Department and to take Item 17a before Communications. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to approve Agenda as modified. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**III. Approve/Modify Minutes of October 10, 2012.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**1. Review Minutes of:**

- a. Criminal Justice Coordinating Board (September 25, 2012).**
- b. Fire Investigation Task Force General Membership (September 6, 2012).**

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to take Items 1 a & b together and receive and place on file. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Although shown in the proper format here, Item 17a was taken at this time.*

*Supervisor Zima arrived at 5:35 p.m.*

**Communications**

- 2. Communication from Supervisor Buckley re: Would like Mr. Miller from the Airport to come to Public Safety Committee and give an update on funding for the Sheriff's Deputy to be stationed at the Airport. *Held for one month.***

Airport Director Tom Miller stated that he had spoken with the TSA liaison earlier in the day and they still had not heard anything from Washington on the possibility of issuing the grant and he did not have any additional information to share at this time.

Supervisor Zima asked Chair Buckley for his rationale on this as he felt there was an abundance of TSA officers in the airport and there did not seem to be too much trouble. Buckley responded that the TSA agents are limited

in the scope of what they can do and they have no power to detain anybody for a criminal act. Any enforcement that needs to be done would need to be done by a deputy that is called to the airport. Miller stated there is an elaborate security plan in place that meets all TSA requirements, but Buckley's opinion was that the plan is more of a makeshift plan. Buckley continued that there is federal funding available for a deputy and used the example of Outagamie County Airport where the federal government pays for a portion of a deputy's salary. Miller stated that the amount the federal government pays towards this deputy will be reduced from \$24/hour to \$20/hour and Outagamie County will be reducing the number of hours of coverage because of this.

Zima asked if there have been incidents at the airport in the last several years where it would have been beneficial to have an officer on the premises. Miller responded that this had been discussed earlier in the year but to discuss the aspects of the security plan in public session would be contrary to regulations of the TSA. Zima suggested that a closed session be added to the next Public Safety agenda to discuss this.

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to hold for one month and add a closed session to the agenda to discuss further. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. **Communication from Supervisor Nicholson re: Request the District Attorney of Brown County to review the State Statutes criteria on placement of sexual predators with possible action. *Held for one month.***

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to hold for one month. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. **Communication from Supervisor Buckley re: Review what is the work week for the 24/7 Employees. *Held for one month.***

Buckley stated that this will be covered under Item 17a.

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to combine Item 4 with Item 7a. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. **Communication from Supervisor De Wane re: To hire another prosecutor for the Drug Task Force to clean up huge back log. *Referred from October County Board.***

Supervisor De Wane stated that this matter was discussed at length at the County budget meeting recently. He wished to keep this as an agenda item because without action it does not appear that this problem will be solved any time soon. De Wane stated that currently the County is running at 50% of the recommended number of prosecutors. In speaking with other legislators, De Wane found that it may be as long as five years until more prosecutors are added to Brown County. Heavy emphasis had been put on the Drug Task Force who is doing a great job, but the problem is the backlog. De Wane understands that the State should be providing additional prosecutors, but he does not see this happening any time soon and he felt that as a County we owe it to the constituents and the service of the men and women doing the job and their safety to get this on the table faster, at least in a manner where they can present a case in court. De Wane asked representatives of the District Attorney's office to address the Committee.

Office Manager Kim Pansier and Assistant DA Larry Lasee spoke on this issue. Lasee stated that he was in favor of getting additional help, even if it was on a contract basis. De Wane stated that there is funding for 2013 in the general fund and he felt some of this should be used to address this issue.

Zima stated that he was generally in favor of this and would probably support either a position or a contract and he was surprised that the rest of the Board did not have the same feeling. He stated that we are currently funding one individual at the County's own expense and this has been helpful. He asked what was being done by staff before the County funded a prosecutor and if regular staff was supplementing the County funded prosecutor or if the one prosecutor was doing everything. Lasee stated that they currently have the prosecutor the Board has provided along with two other prosecutors handling primarily drug cases. They also have a fourth prosecutor who handles a significant number of drug cases and was involved with the Drug Task Force for several years. This prosecutor is in tune with the complex cases that come in such as conspiracies and the Len Bias cases which relate to homicides that have resulted from drug overdoses.

Zima asked what the current backlog was and Lasee stated that currently there are approximately 1,000 drug charges in waiting from 2011 and 2012 that have not had decisions made on charging and are considered to be backlogged. From 2011 there are approximately 400 charges that are under review and about 600 charges from 2012 are under review. Zima asked how many cases have been brought to court and Lasee stated it was approximately 800 in 2012. Office Manager Kim Pansier clarified that the breakdown from 2011 and 2012 are for actual charges, not cases and indicated that there could be a number of felony charges in one case. Numbers are based on referred charges.

Lasee indicated that often cases are complicated in that they involve conspiracies. Zima agreed that cases could be complicated but assumed that they were well documented. Lasee agreed but pointed out that the DA's office is not necessarily involved in the investigation stage but rather in the prosecution stage. Lasee also stated that there is a significant number of cases that come into the office involving drug related crimes that may not have an actual drug description but are drug related. The number of these cases has vastly increased to the neighborhood of 60 – 70%.

Zima asked how many more prosecutors the DA's office would need to keep up. Lasee stated that they are currently staffed at 50% of the number of attorneys needed according to the State's own independent audit. The reality based upon Lasee's 35 years of experience is that they could even use more than that number because cases could be handled at a more intense level that would result in more significant penalties. Lasee addressed a question from Buckley as to if adding prosecutors would create a backlog in the court system by stating that the court system is not over saturated and additional prosecutors should not result in a backlog in the court.

Supervisor Clancy commented that the Sheriff's Department investigator hired through Human Services to investigate welfare fraud has saved over \$1 million dollars in fraudulent activity and he noted that the County has not received anything from the State for reimbursement, even though the County is doing the State's job and should be getting some compensation. He felt hiring another prosecutor in the DA's office would result in the same scenario and this is sending the message to the State that they can bypass this and take care of other needs. He felt that the State should be pressured to provide some compensation to do the job the County is doing. Clancy continued that our job is to get ahold of legislators and let them know that we are being squeezed and giving them money. Clancy also felt that when drug arrests result in recovery of cash, vehicles and other property the County should be entitled to receive much more from those arrests than we do. It bothers him a great deal that the County is basically providing these services to the State for gratis and we still have a problem because it is not recognized. It is his suggestion that we get some legislators at a meeting and let them know that the County cannot keep this up. Until this is relayed to the appropriate officials he will not support this on the rationale that if we keep doing this it sends a poor message to the State.

Zima agreed with Clancy and felt this was a top priority, however, he also felt that we cannot wait for them to do something but rather need to be proactive in the meantime. He felt that communication was the best thing to do and also suggested that a meeting be scheduled with three or four legislators so that that the County's

concerns could be relayed. He felt that if we do not get any help from the State, and in the interest of quality life in the community, we have to take this on ourselves and deal with it and he is in favor of it.

County Executive Troy Streckenbach stated that funding would have to come from the general fund and he also commented that he felt that the State should be pressured to add more DAs. He was concerned with levying more and more for the State's responsibilities.

Buckley asked if there was a cost estimate for this and Lasee indicated that salary and benefits would be \$70,500. He also stated that if an attorney is added a support staff would also need to be added at a cost of \$56,000. Buckley asked what a one year contract would cost and Lasee felt a contract would be in the range of \$50,000. Buckley stated that if he were to approve this, he would like to see a contract that renewed each year based upon what the State does so it is not on our budget indefinitely. Lasee stated that they would definitely be amenable to a contracted attorney and Buckley stated that it may get more support on doing this on a one year contract basis.

De Wane wished to comment on Clancy's earlier statement and said he realized how hard the fraud investigators are working and he knows staff has been working a lot with the legislators to try to convince them that the County should be getting part of the money and he knows that the Sheriff's Department and others have been lobbying for this. He also stated that the Court system has been lobbying for years to try to get help and are being ignored. The local legislators have been listening to this for a number of years. Clancy responded that there is a surplus in Madison and questioned the State's priorities.

With regard to a contracted position, Buckley asked if a person was to be brought on if they would work through the Drug Task Force office or with the rest of the attorneys in the DA's office. He understood that an attorney would need support staff but wanted to know if the Drug Task Force would have enough support staff to utilize. Lasee stated he did not believe the Drug Task Force would have support staff that would have access to the support system that the DA's office uses to generate their criminal complaints and related paperwork. There are currently no DA's dedicated specifically to the Drug Task Force. Lasee stated that the attorney that is funded by the County does exclusively DTF work, but she works in the office with the rest of the DA's and their support staff. Lasee stated the support staff for the County funded DA currently works for two drug attorneys and sometimes a third and is already stretched to the limit and he did not feel it would be possible for that support person to work for a fourth attorney.

It was also Lasee's opinion that the District Attorney is doing a very good job of trying to approve efficiencies within the office and there have been some changes made that the DA would be happy to come over and talk about.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson to add one prosecutor and one support staff. No second, no vote taken.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to take \$120,000 out of the general fund to contract for two attorneys and also \$50,000 to fund support staff and dedicate these positions to the Drug Task Force.**

Supervisor Robinson questioned if this was approved at the Board level, if there would be associated costs incurred that filter through the system that the Board would need to account for such as at the jail level or the court level. Director of Administration Brent Miller indicated that consideration would also need to be given to office space, computer, software licenses, etc.

Buckley indicated he would like to see a one-time dollar amount given to the DA's office to go forward and let them use it how they see fit. He does not know if they will get three positions passed at the County Board level but he does have some concerns on how this is handled. He would rather see one lump dollar amount given for contracting the employee or employees if they choose. Zima stated that that was what his motion was. He indicated this was to be taken out of the general fund and then studied throughout the course of the year. This is not to add permanent positions of staff but rather is a way to plug the gaps and give time to study throughout the course of the year.

Additional clarification was asked for on the backlog of cases and Pansier stated that there are currently approximately 1,000 charges backlogged and each case has an average of three charges. She also stated that for 2011 they had 600 misdemeanors and 775 felonies go through the system by three DA's working full-time.

De Wane stated that he had spoken with DA Lasee who indicated that one person plus a support staff could put a dent in the backlog. Buckley suggested allocating \$75,000 - \$80,000 on the premise that by the time this gets up and running they will be into 2013 and then it can be re-evaluated. Further discussion ensued with regard to a dollar amount.

**Motion amended by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to allocate \$150,000 from the general fund for contracted help. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to invite local State representatives to the next Public Safety Committee meeting. No vote taken.**

**Motion amended by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to have board staff contact State representatives to set up a meeting. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **Public Safety Communications**

**6. Budget Status Financial Reports for September & October, 2012.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to receive and place on file. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**7. Director's Report.**

Interim Director Cullen Peltier provided the Committee with a Director's Report, a copy of which is attached.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Zima to receive and place on file. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**7a. Report on the Brown County Public Safety Communications Center.**

Cullen Peltier provided a history of what has transpired in the Communications Center. He became Interim Director in September, 2011 and a third party audit was also requested at that time to come up with a report and recommendations on conditions affecting effectiveness, efficiency and morale of the Communications Center and also recommendations for improvement. The audit team was put together by the County Executive and consisted of the Assistant Chief of Police from the City of Green Bay, Assistant Fire Chief from Green Bay Fire Department, a Captain from the Brown County Sheriff's Department and a Lieutenant from the Green Bay Fire Department also assisted. A copy of the report was distributed to the Committee and is attached. The report contains recommendations made by the committee for improvements within the department. Peltier received

this report in late October or early November and has reviewed the recommendations which start on Page 5 of the report. Peltier also provided the Committee with written responses to the recommendations, a copy of which is attached.

Nicholson stated that in light of the amount of information contained in the report it may be prudent to hold this item for a month to allow sufficient time to review the report. Buckley was agreeable to holding for a month and stated that perhaps in conjunction with that they could also look at putting together a committee of supervisors to review this. He stated it was a broad picture and being immersed in it, there is a lot of information to digest and a lot of things to be examined. Zima stated he would like the opportunity to review the report and discuss it at the next meeting. Zima wanted to know what the status was of putting together the job description for the deputy director and Peltier responded that this is discussed on Page 5 of the report. Peltier stated there is not an actual job description as of this time, but this is addressed at number 10 where it talks about creating a full-time position devoted solely to training. Peltier continued that they have met with administration and HR several times on this to come up with a plan for what they feel is best for the table of organization at this time and moving forward with the radio project and elimination of a position. They have finalized what direction they wish to take and HR is working on this at this time and should be done by the January, 2013 Public Safety Committee meeting. Zima stated that this deputy position should be able to take over when anything happens and should have a firm hand and know what is going on.

*Supervisor Carpenter arrived at 6:50 p.m.*

*Supervisor Nicholson was excused at 6:50 p.m.*

Buckley stated that there is a lot of substance to the report and if it is held for one month to give everyone an opportunity to review it, at the same time a committee should be put together to review how this will move forward. This committee could consist of any supervisor who is interested. Because this involves other municipalities within the County, there are a lot of people interested in how this moves forward and Buckley wanted to ensure that it moves forward in an efficient and fiscal manner. He also felt we have to look at reestablishing an advisory committee of some sort as there was in the past. Buckley would like to ensure that Administration/Corporation Counsel makes sure this is set up properly so this process can get started. Peltier stated that they are ready to work with the advisory board as soon as it is set up. Zima also stated that he did not feel this Committee should be abdicating its responsibility or decision making powers to any advisory committee. He does not have a problem with end users getting together and bringing forth concerns but it has to be brought to the Public Safety Committee and not the advisory committee. Peltier stated that the idea of the advisory board is to provide guidance and customer feedback to the Department which would report directly to the Brown County Executive and operate under the policy oversight of the Public Safety Committee. Buckley also felt that the advisory committee needs to report out to the Public Safety Committee so it does not fall back into what happened several years ago when it went defunct.

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to hold for one month. Vote taken.  
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Sheriff:**

8. **Budget Status Financial Report for October, 2012.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to receive and place on file. Vote taken.  
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

9. **Budget Adjustment Request (12-100): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in revenue.**

This request is to increase donation revenue and equipment expenses to recognize a donation from the Vietnam Vets Chapter 224 for the purchase of wheel weight scales to be used by the Sheriff's traffic team and accident reconstruction officers.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

10. **Budget Adjustment Request (12-102): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in revenue.**

This request is to re-allocate dollars from an insurance expense account and money recovered from insurance to the Sheriff's Patrol outlay account to purchase a replacement squad car. There is no levy impact.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

11. **Budget Adjustment Request (12-110): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in revenue.**

This is a request to increase revenues with offsetting increase in expenses to recognize reimbursements received through the Wisconsin Dept. of Justice CEASE program, which provides funding for participation in certain cannabis reduction efforts. The CEASE funding was not previously budgeted as the amounts cannot be determined in advance. There is no levy impact with this adjustment.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

12. **Budget Adjustment Request (12-117): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in revenue.**

This is a request to increase DARE fund expenses and offsetting revenues to reflect projected year end amounts.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

13. **Key Factor Report through October, 2012.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to receive and place on file. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

14. **Jail Average Daily Population by Month and Type for the Calendar Year 2012.**

Sheriff John Gossage stated that the jail is currently at 85% capacity.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Zima to receive and place on file. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

15. **Resolution re: 2013 County-Tribal Law Enforcement Grant.**

Gossage stated that this is an annual grant that is received by Brown County and the Oneida Tribe of Indians from the Wisconsin Department of Justice. The grant is in the amount of \$36,444 for the calendar year 2013 and Brown County will receive half of that amount while the Tribe receives the other half.

**Motion made by Supervisor Clancy, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

16. **Resolution for Approval of Police Service Contract with Village of Howard.**

This is the 2013, 2014 and 2015 police services contract with the Village of Howard. The current contract will expire at the end of the year and therefore needs to be renewed. The contract rates are consistent with the rates given to Bellevue, Allouez and Suamico. Financials are attached to the contract in the agenda packet.

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

17. **Resolution for Approval of Police Service Contract with Village of Suamico.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

17a. **Resolution to Authorize the use of placement in a Juvenile Detention Facility Jail as a Disposition under Wis. Stat. §938.34.**

Sheriff Gossage, Child Protection/Juvenile Justice Manager Jim Hermans and Juvenile Justice Supervisor Scott Shackelford addressed the Committee. Gossage stated that the State law was changed and this proposed resolution is to adopt State Statutes that would enable juveniles to be held in detention for 180 days instead of 30 days. This will allow savings in transportation for transporting juveniles to Lincoln Hills.

Hermans stated that they have had good communications with the Sheriff and his staff with regard to this plan and this is an authorizing resolution for the juvenile court judges to place someone in the local secure detention facility instead of having to send them away to Lincoln Hills. This would not mean that all juveniles will be served locally instead of going to State corrections, but those that are thought to have the chance and likelihood of being successful would be served locally. Hermans believed this would help from not only a better outcome standpoint but also from a more prudent use of resources standpoint. The cost for State corrections is approximately \$290 per day.

Shackelford stated that juveniles are placed on average 8 – 12 months at Lincoln Hills and handling these individuals in Brown County would result in a much shorter time period based upon progress. His standpoint as a supervisor of juvenile court is that staff who are working with the youth are able to work with them in our home community which will allow providing custom services to the kids.

Buckley asked if there was an estimate of cost savings involved with this and Hermans responded that the cost for placement at State corrections for a year is in excess of \$100,000 and the estimates for providing quality services locally will be one-third (1/3) of that cost or less which is a considerable savings. This is not being done primarily for cost savings, but the primary reason is the best outcomes for these juveniles and the goal is to relocate the youth so that they are successful as adult citizens in our community. In doing so, there could also be considerable cost savings.



Clancy asked if when youth are transported if a staff member can do it or if it needs to be done by law enforcement. It was indicated that once a youth is ordered up to Lincoln Hills the transport is done by law enforcement and the Sheriff's Department. It has to be a secure transport and a contracted vendor could be used, but there would still be an incurred cost to the County. Lincoln Hills is in Irma, Wisconsin and there is one HS staff that monitors youth placed at Lincoln Hills and she needs to go there monthly to monitor the youth. They have also found that with economic times the way they are, sometimes it is difficult for families to get up to Lincoln Hills to stay involved in the youth's treatment. Shackelford added that re-entering the community also becomes more difficult after a long stay away.

Zima asked if there would be any liability in approving this resolution and it was indicated that there was not. Gossage stated that he did check on this with the Department of Corrections and was informed that there is no differentiation from a juvenile sentenced to 180 days versus a short term juvenile and it is permissible to house them together. This would not increase staffing either as there is currently one male and one female guard that can handle up to 30 juvenile offenders so it does not matter if it is long terms or the service is contracted out.

**Motion made by Supervisor Clancy, seconded by Supervisor Nicholson to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**18. Sheriff's Report.**

Gossage addressed concerns of Supervisor Clancy earlier in the meeting with regard to State reimbursements for the fraud investigators. Gossage stated that they are currently working with DHS to try to get funding for the fraud investigator and this was one of the initiatives that the County Executive will be going to speak with the Governor's budget committee on. They have been working with the legislators and they seem supportive in concept, but Gossage does not know the current status. Clancy responded that the County is spending \$102,000 for a deputy and he stated that he would be satisfied if the State just paid for the deputy, even though he felt we should get more. Gossage agreed and stated that that is one of the initiatives and they are looking at not only getting a stipend for what they return, but they are also looking for staffing dollars.

Delain added that as far as the budget is concerned, they are projecting that overall they will meet their budget at the end of the year.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Zima to receive and place on file. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Circuit Courts, Commissioners, Probate**

**19. Budget Status Financial Reports for September & October, 2012.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to take Items 19, 20 & 21 together and receive and place on file. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Clerk of Courts**

**20. Budget Status Financial Report for October, 2012.**

*See action at Item 19 above.*

**Medical Examiner**

21. **2012 Brown County Medical Examiner Activity Spreadsheet.**

*See action at Item 19 above.*

**District Attorney** – No agenda items.

**Emergency Management** – No agenda items.

**Other**

22. **Audit of bills.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Clancy to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

23. **Such other matters as authorized by law.**

24. **Adjourn.**

**Motion made by Supervisor Clancy, seconded by Supervisor Zima to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio  
Recording Secretary

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

*Brown County*



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Emergency Communication Services  
9-1-1 Center Operations  
Emergency Management

PHONE (920) 391-7400  
FAX (920) 391-7406

James V. Nickel, PE  
Director

## Director's Report – Communications Center Update December 5, 2012

### 1. Radio Project Update

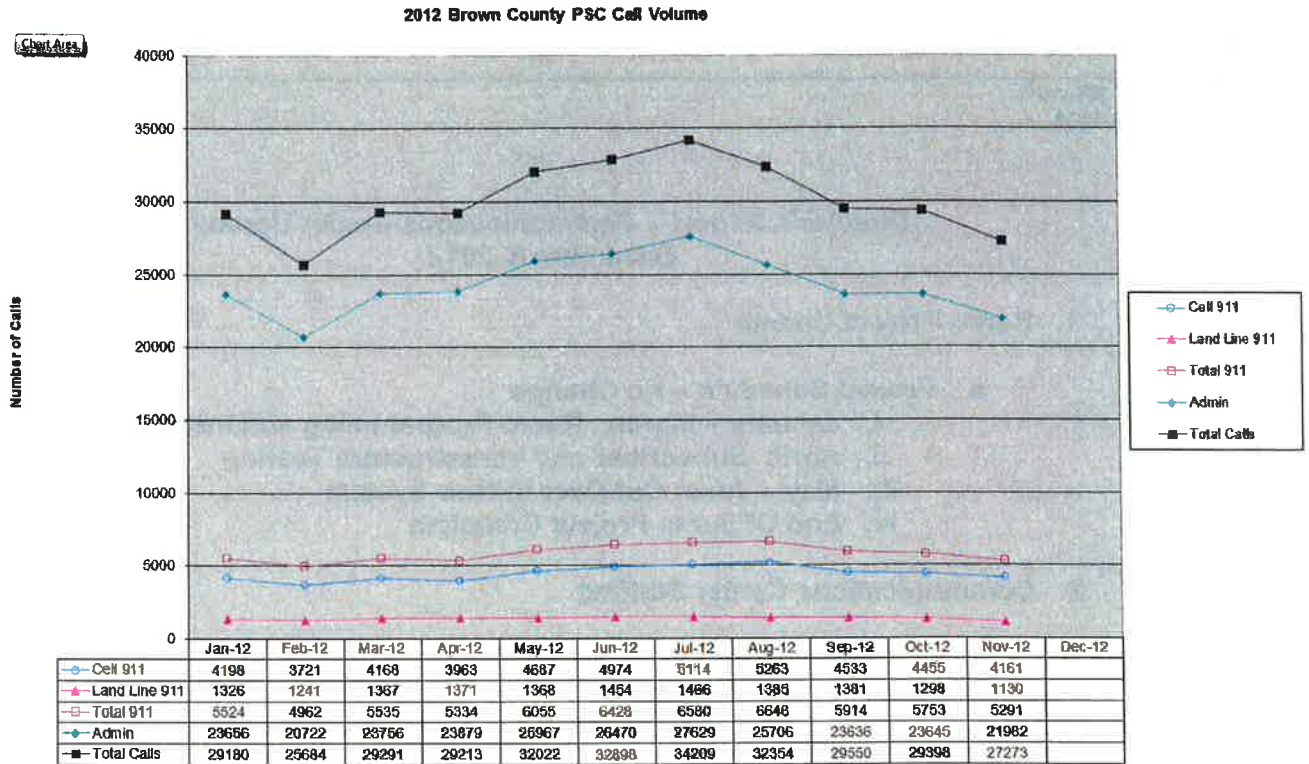
- a. Project Schedule – No Change
  - i. January – March: Radio Programming and Installation
  - ii. April: Subscriber and Infrastructure Testing
  - iii. May – June: Cut Over to New System
  - iv. End Of June: Project Complete

### 2. Communications Center Staffing

- a. Full-Time Openings
  - i. 6 New Hires on Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>
    - 1. 1 New Hire could not complete training
  - ii. 2 Resignations and 1 Termination in November
  - iii. 1 Opening created with the promotion of a Lead to Supervisor
- b. 4 Part-Time (.5 FTE) Positions
  - i. 2 Started on October 14<sup>th</sup>
  - ii. 1 Will begin January 21<sup>st</sup>
  - iii. A recently resigned employee is interested in final opening
- c. Temporary Employees
  - i. Currently utilizing 3 temporary employees
- d. Supervisor Opening
  - i. The Supervisor opening will be filled January 21<sup>st</sup>
- e. Lead Opening
  - i. Posted on November 30<sup>th</sup>
  - ii. Hope to fill by the time of the supervisory promotion
- f. Bottom Line: We are down 1 Full-Time and 1 Part-Time
- g. Recruitment for Eligibility List
  - i. Recruitment Closed on Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>
  - ii. 189 People applied
  - iii. Interviews will begin December 10<sup>th</sup>
  - iv. List to be established by February 1<sup>st</sup>



### 3. Call Statistics



### 4. Shift Scheduling

- a. An Ad Hoc Committee was formed to look at alternatives to our current Shift Scheduling Model
- b. The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting was on December 4<sup>th</sup>

# Report on the Brown County Public Safety Communications Center



Assistant Chief of Police Lisa Sterr  
Green Bay Police Department

Assistant Fire Chief Rob Goplin & Lt. Chris Ehmann  
Green Bay Fire Department

Capt. David Konrath  
Brown County Sheriff's Office

Conditions affecting the Effectiveness, Efficiency and  
Morale of the Communications Center with  
Recommendations for Improvement

10/17/2012

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## INTRODUCTION

*"9-1-1 is the universal number recognized as a lifeline for individuals in distress. The hallmark of a properly functioning emergency telephone system is immediate connection with a 9-1-1 operator and a quick response from a police officer, fire fighter and/or EMS personnel."*

In an effort to identify and determine the extent of issues impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of the Brown County Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC), representatives from the Green Bay Police & Fire Department and the Brown County Sheriff's Office were asked to conduct an evaluation. The advisory panel consisted of Assistant Chief of Police Lisa Sterr, Green Bay Police Department, Assistant Fire Chief Rob Goplin and Lt. Chris Ehmann, Green Bay Fire Department, and Capt. David Konrath, Brown County Sheriff's Office. These agencies and their representatives were selected based on being the largest user clients of the services provided by PSCC.

Public Safety Communications is obligated to operate the recognized Public Safety Answering Points for 9-1-1 service in Brown County 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This organization is the only entity in Brown County charged with the purpose of providing services and solutions to meet the communication needs of all public safety agencies in Brown County. They work to ensure effective planning and continued operation of Brown County and all its communities in the event of emergency situations through countywide disaster planning and emergency command operations. The coordination of personnel, equipment and networks to provide these services countywide is the focus of the organization. The PSCC mission statement is to *"provide a vital link to the public and all emergency services. We are committed to serving with integrity, cooperation, and concern for the welfare of others. Our goal is to provide expedient, courteous and quality service to the community. Our standard is excellence and our model of success is teamwork."*

The review and preparation of the report consisted of the following key approaches:

- An employee survey
- Employee interviews
- Research

Findings of the survey revealed eight primary issues and were used as the basis for the employee interviews. Both completing the survey and participating in the interviews was completely voluntary, and all participants were informed that their responses were confidential.

A total of 55 of the 65 employees completed the survey. In addition 46 employees participated in the interview process. The advisory panel attempted to give all employees the opportunity to be interviewed by scheduling interviews during all three working shifts. Some employees

declined to be interviewed, were on their days off or on vacation, or were off due to family leave.

The interview questions were:

1. The survey has indicated that inversing is the primary concern among employees. In your opinion, what is the major issue concerning inversing?
2. Comp time is another major concern for the employees of the center. In your opinion, what could be done to manage comp time differently?
3. More than  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of respondents to the survey stated that they felt a different shift schedule would be beneficial to both the center and the employees. Can you give us an example of a different shift schedule that you would think would work better than the current?
4. Can you give us some examples of unfair or unequal treatment of personnel that you have personally witnessed in the center?
5. Can you give us some examples of inconsistencies between shifts that you have personally witnessed within the center?
6. Management's recognition of employee performance has been cited as a significant factor to poor morale. Is the problem the recognition of good performance or bad performance? Or is it something else?
7. What ideas can you offer that would improve employee development opportunities within the center?
8. The training program for the Communications Center is a concern for employees. What are the issues surrounding the training program? (Examples: New hire training? Continuing education? CTO burnout?)



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Brown County Communications Center is experiencing a problem retaining employees. From 2011 through October of 2012, 24 individuals have resigned from the PSCC, with only one based on retirement. Of the 24 resignations, six left within their first year of employment. Attrition is costly to any organization. Employees are recruited, hired, and trained to perform tasks. The agency invests in each new employee that is hired. When that employee leaves after a short period, that investment is lost. When senior telecommunicators leave, their experience leaves with them. These losses contributed too many of the negative factors surrounding the operation. The center is lacking sufficient qualified staff to meet its demands; inversing of staff to work overtime is already manifesting in signs of burnout and stress associated with the long hours; and, there are an insufficient number of trainers to meet the demands of training new staff.

PSCC managers are tasked with providing the best services possible with many fiscal limitations. The rewrite of Brown County's employee personnel manual (Chapter 4) has a direct relationship to poor morale and retention of employees. Any changes, if deemed appropriate, are outside of the scope of the Director's authority. The modification of personnel rules and regulations is the responsibility of the County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive. It is our understanding that the topic of overtime pay for the involuntary requirement to work additional hours is currently under review by the County Board.

In addition there has been insufficient support of the center staff by management; inconsistencies between shifts in supervisory application of policy; and a culture within the center that has contributed to a less than desirable working environment.

It is understood that currently the Brown County Public Safety Committee has oversight of the PSCC; however, the question that cannot be answered is the existence of the Brown County Public Safety Communications Board which is defined under Brown County Ordinance Chapter 36 and the intergovernmental agreement that formed the PSCC. There are currently two organized groups which periodically meet to discuss mutual concerns and look for means of correcting deficiencies by providing necessary feedback between all participating agencies: for general issues, there is the Dispatch Users Group (DUG) comprised of all participating law enforcement agencies of the Brown County Public Safety Communications Center, and the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) group for issues pertaining to fire and EMS; it is unclear whether or not these groups were intended to take the place of the Communications Board.

Since appointment as interim director of the Brown County Public Safety Communications Center, Mr. Cullen Peltier has been proactive in his efforts to involve personnel and invest in an effort to change some of these conditions. Interim Director Peltier is continually assessing processes to ensure efficiency and determine best practices.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Immediately appoint a permanent Director of the communications center.
2. Continue to honor the intergovernmental agreement that maintains the communications center as an independent agency.
3. Re-form the Advisory Board as defined in the intergovernmental agreement and meet quarterly as intended.
4. Management should develop and implement an alternate system for inverting employees.
5. Management should return compensatory time under the previous 40/40 rule, but block out those months in which time off, due to vacations, are at their highest.
6. New hire training should begin with a five to six week classroom model.
7. Create CTO Supervisors who oversee a trainee's progress.
8. Develop and utilize task sheets during observation periods at dispatch consoles.
9. Recruit and train more CTO's.
10. Create a full time position devoted solely to training needs and requirements.
11. The training coordinator should create a training manual and formalized training program for new Supervisors.
12. Leadership training should be provided for all Supervisors
13. The training coordinator should create and implement a comprehensive, sustainable continuing education program for all personnel.
14. Management should strive to formalize the communication processes to improve communications with all personnel in the center.
15. PSCC management should provide orientation and training to supervisors and managers regarding the importance of consistent communication to employees and between managers.
16. Management should strive for consistent communication with employees by implementing communication tools including brief manager/supervisor meetings, communication notebooks, and use of technology (i.e. computers, texting, cell phones)
17. Management should research different shift schedule options, with involvement and input from supervisors and telecommunicators, to determine whether or not a new schedule would benefit both the center and the employees.
18. Leadership of the communications center should work diligently to be present and have on-going conversations with employees about daily operations and long-term vision.
19. Communications Center supervisors must step in and actively resolve conflict between telecommunicators if they are disrupting the center or an individual's work performance.
20. Management should immediately implement efforts to improve employee morale.
21. The communications center should re-define the role of the Lead Telecommunicator and clearly communicate the role to all personnel.
22. The Lead Telecommunicator should be used as a preparatory role for the supervisor position.
23. Create focus groups utilizing existing staff and provide them with the ability to engage in the process and provide recommendations for improvement.

24. Management should establish processes for recognizing both outstanding and poor performance and equally apply the processes to all employees.
25. Conflict resolution training should be conducted to empower supervisors to address issues that arise between employees in the center.

Additional recommendations for substantive changes can also be found starting on page 27 of this report.

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key findings and recommendations are summarized below:

### **STABILITY IN LEADERSHIP:**

Quite possibly the most pressing issues facing the Brown County Public Safety Communications Center is stability in the primary leadership position. As a pivotal element of the public safety system in Brown County, the stability of the communications center is critically important. Uncertainty related to the Directors position will contribute to feelings of instability and insecurity within the center. Both the employees of the center and the citizens of Brown County must have confidence that the center is running effectively and efficiently.

Attempts to shift management of the communications center under the control of other entities or agencies will only serve to prolong the instability. Additionally, the premise under which the current center was formed was predicated on the understanding that it would be a standalone entity in order to remain responsive to all client agencies. Furthermore, it is unlikely that client agencies would come to consensus regarding which agency should manage the center, nor are all agencies likely to support that concept.

According to the intergovernmental agreement that formed the PSCC, the Director reported to an Advisory Board. The board was created by the signing of the intergovernmental agreement and its membership defined therein. Over time, the advisory board appears to have gone dormant for unknown reasons. It is unknown if the appearance of the PSC Director at county wide Police and Fire Chief's meetings was thought to be somewhat of a substitute. The members of the Advisory Board and the Chief's Associations are the same members.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- I. Immediately appoint a Director of the communications center.
- II. Continue to honor the intergovernmental agreement that maintains the communications center as an independent agency.
- III. Re-form the Advisory Board as defined in the intergovernmental agreement and meet quarterly as intended.

### INVERSING:

**Figure 1-1 Inversing Survey Results: Rate the following factors contributing to poor morale with the center.**

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
61.7% (29)	31.9% (15)	6.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.00	47

*Interview question: The survey has indicated that inversing is the primary concern among employees. In your opinion, what is the major issue concerning inversing?*

Inversing is the involuntary requirement to work additional hours outside of an employee's regularly scheduled hours. This is either accomplished by holding them over after their shift or ordering them to report early for their shift. Inversing occurs when there are staff shortages within the center. Currently, the shortage is severe due to the number of telecommunicators who have left. A contributing factor, but not necessarily the sole reason, is the impact felt from the changes to personnel rules and regulations (chapter four). One of the most significant and most maligned changes is that employees will only be paid overtime after working 40 hours, whereas employees used to be paid overtime for time worked beyond eight hours in a given day.

There is a concern how the inversing is affecting people who are junior in seniority, and who carry the majority of the burden. Many work twelve hours shifts all five days of their work week. There is a disparity amongst senior personnel whether or not to volunteer in sharing the work load. Some are concerned that the junior staff are suffering "burnout" and offer to take some of the shifts, while others feel they, when they were junior, suffered the same dilemma and it's just part of the job.

The problem of "burnout" has an element of public safety to it if the telecommunicators are so overworked that there is potential for errors to occur, which could exacerbate a critical incident.

In conversation with some of the newly hired personnel, they indicated during the pre-employment interview it was not clearly stated how much inversing would occur and felt they should have been told upfront about it.

Several employees believe that it is mandatory to make themselves available four hours before the start of their shift and four hours after the end of their shift in case they are needed for an inverse call-in. We were unable to find any formal documentation that mandates this requirement; however it is clear from our conversation with staff, especially junior staff, that this is indeed an expectation. Those who have missed a call, which forces a more senior person to take the shift, are made to "feel" the resentment from the senior staff when they return to work. When asked how they were informed about the

requirement, many stated it was something they learned during their initial training. There are no instances of formal disciplinary actions for those who missed a call. The lack of written policy or disciplinary action for violating the policy indicates that this is an informal practice, but one that is enforced between staff.

Short notice inversing, typically created by other staff calling-in sick, has an impact on the telecommunicators' personal lives. Many of the junior staff have young families and some of the senior staff have older parents that need their assistance, which makes it difficult to find child care on short notice or reschedule appointments with or for their parents. In addition, the volume of forced overtime leaves little time for their family lives.

Possible solutions to the inversing were discussed. To follow are the two options conveyed during the interviews. The vast majority of staff indicated "something needs to be done" with a few dissenters who feel they suffered through it and the junior staff should as well.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- I. Management should develop and implement an alternate system for inversing employees. The following two options were presented during the interviews.
  - **Rotating Inverse Schedule:** A listing of personnel with junior staff at the top and senior staff at the bottom would be created. Once a forced inverse occurs, the inversed person would go to the bottom of the list. A caveat to this recommendation is that if a person volunteers for an inverse/overtime they would also go to the bottom of the list. This is cyclical in spreading the inversing to all the staff, not just those who are junior.
  - **Inverse Cap:** There would be a maximum of three 12 hour inverse shifts allowed in a five day work week. When a person has been inversed for three 12 hours shifts they could not be inversed again during that work week, and the assignment goes to the next person in seniority. Seniority is a factor in this recommendation as well and starts with the junior most person.

#### **COMPENSATORY TIME**

**Figure 1-2 Compensatory Time Survey Results: Rate the following factors contributing to poor morale with the center.**

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
61.7% (29)	14.9% (7)	14.9% (7)	6.4% (3)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47

Interview Question: *Comp time is another major concern for the employees of the center. In your opinion, what could be done to manage comp time differently?*

Under personnel rules<sup>1</sup>, telecommunicators are allowed to bank up to eighty (80) hours of compensatory time. The department practice permitted the accrual of eighty (80) hours; forty (40) hours could be used for time off, and forty (40) hours banked and paid out at year end. On August 17, 2012 previous Public Safety Communications Director Karl Fleury indicated in a memorandum to staff that: 'Effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 all comp time earned will be paid out. We will review this periodically to see if it can be reinstated.' While this decision understandably resulted from a deficiency in staff, it may have been too rigid of a response. During the reorganization of chapter four, other benefits, such as vacation and holidays, were also restructured. When the aforementioned compensatory time policy change was made, staff believed it to be punitive.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. Management should return compensatory time under the previous 40/40 rule, but block out those months in which time off due to vacations is at its highest: the months of June, July, August and December. Staff could utilize 40 hours of accrued comp. time in the months not blocked out and bank up to 40 hours to be paid out at the end of the year.

**TRAINING**

**Figure 1-3 Training Process Survey Results: Rate the following factors contributing to poor morale with the center.**

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
40.4% (19)	38.3% (18)	21.3% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.00	47

Interview question: *The training program for the Communication Center is a concern for employees. What are the issues surrounding the training program? (Examples: New hire training? Continuing education? CTO burnout?)*

<sup>1</sup>**4.58 Compensatory Time:** Upon mutual prior consent, employees may bank up to eighty (80) hours of overtime earned in a compensatory time bank. Employees may request the use of compensatory time off at the rate at which such time is earned. Use of compensatory time shall be by mutual consent. At the end of each calendar year, any unused compensatory time will be paid out. Accumulation of compensatory time shall not exceed eighty (80) hours during each calendar year, and shall not be accumulative from year to year. All compensatory time shall be taken at a time which is mutually agreeable between the employee and the Department Head or supervisor. Compensatory time shall not be taken for more than one week at a time.

There are a multitude of issues surrounding the topic of training. They encompass entry level, supervisory, continuing education, and the volume of new hire training. The large volume of training for new hires, coupled with very high turnover, is creating fatigue for the trainers themselves.

The position of public safety telecommunicator involves more than answering the telephone, getting a location and sending responding units to calls for service. Public safety communications has evolved into a specialized and professional field requiring the application of knowledge, attributes and skills not commonly found in other occupations. Telecommunicators perform various duties such as receiving emergency and non-emergency calls for public service via computerized E-911 equipment, dispatching appropriate resources utilizing a computer aided dispatch (CAD) system and automated mapping system, maintaining unit activity and status records, providing emergency medical pre-arrival instructions, serving as an information resource to response units and the general public, operating radio transmitters in accordance with FCC rules and regulations, communicating via mobile data computers and maintaining electronic data files.

**New Hire Training:** Under the existing training process for newly hired telecommunicators, they receive 12 – 14 weeks of training to become qualified as a 'Call-Taker / 9-1-1 operator.' Initially, the length of training seemed excessive; however, we have learned that the complexity of the position requires extensive training. Compared to a similarly size communications center that provides 24-hour dispatching services for all law, fire and EMS agencies, Rock County, has a minimum of (30) weeks of on-the-job training. That does not mean that efficiencies were not considered. After discussion with staff regarding the most effective manner of providing training, some changes have already been made.

The current new hire training program was obtained from the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and is respected in the communications community. Regardless, there is a perception among some trainers that many new employees are retained longer than necessary. They indicated that a Communications Training Officer (CTO) can assess if a trainee has the capacity to be a telecommunicator after 5 to 6 weeks of training, but believe those who are not showing improvement are kept because of staffing needs. There is not sufficient time to explore the validity of this concern, but an inference can be made that it may be a problem with the proper application of the APCO process.

The overall structure of new hire training is problematic as well. It is common place for a trainee to be with multiple trainers who may or may not be certified as a CTO, sometimes two different trainers in one day. The original intent was to place a trainee with the same trainer for a period of two weeks and off one week, so there is consistency in the training and provide adequate breaks for the trainers. Due to the present staffing and atmosphere in the center there is a lack of experienced telecommunicators who are willing to become CTO's. This is primarily because of the "burnout" of existing personnel, including non-CTO's, who have been continually training new people since the time frame when Ashwaubenon Public Safety was incorporated into the center.

All training is recorded on a Daily Observation Report (DOR) with a grading for each process in the evaluation, from 1 (poor) to 7 (excellent). If a trainee receives either a very low or very high rating, the



trainer should provide information which justifies the rating. It appears that regular progress meetings with the training coordinator are "hit or miss" based on the coordinator's availability. In addition, when a trainee moves from one trainer to the next the historic documentation (DOR) is not available to the new trainer, making it difficult to track progress or determine what training has been previously conducted.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. New hire training should begin with a five to six week classroom model. This recommendation will be implemented for the next new hires. The goal is twofold; the first being to have the probationary employee prepared to engage in taking calls while concurrently establishing a cursory understanding of the role of a dispatcher. This will allow them to be more familiar with the responsibilities of the dispatch position, thereby becoming a more effective call taker. Second, this model provides the efficiency of being able to train multiple new hires with one or two trainers while providing the CTO's with some needed relief.
- II. Create CTO Supervisors who oversee a trainee's progress. This can be accomplished by keeping abreast of the DOR's and consulting with the CTO on a regular basis to ensure performance expectations are being met. Periodically, at predetermined stages or if a problem arises, the trainer, trainee and training coordinator should meet and discuss the trainee's progress. There should be measures within the process when a trainee is Not Responding to Training (NRT), for an extension of training and/or development of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
- III. Develop and utilize task sheets during observation periods at dispatch consoles. During periods of time in which a new hire is required to observe operations at dispatch consoles, specific tasks should be accomplished and checked off by the telecommunicator being observed.
- IV. Recruit and train more CTO's. There is a current deficit in qualified CTO's since many have left the employ of the county. All CTO's receive their training certification through APCO, which certifies experienced telecommunicators to train and evaluate new trainees in a one-on-one training situation. Upon completion, CTO's can help build and maintain the CTO system while exploring the important elements of an effective CTO program. Training personnel need to develop employee training within the framework of a comprehensive, ongoing, and consistent employee training program. This quality employee training program is essential to keep staff motivated about learning new concepts and reinforcing existing issues. The Brown County PSCC has individuals who have completed the "Train-the Trainer" program so training of new CTO's can be performed in-house.

**Training Coordinator:** Another deficiency is the lack of a person whose full time responsibility is devoted to training. Currently, the training falls onto the shoulders of a supervisor who splits her time between working the floor and training responsibilities. This supervisor is only able to dedicate time to training responsibilities when a second supervisor is on duty. Public safety communications training coordinators

are typically tasked with the planning, development, coordination, implementation and administration of training within a public safety communication center.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. Create a full time position devoted solely to training needs and requirements.

**Supervisory Training:** Development of Supervisors is critical for organizations so that managers can effectively direct and organize work. Supervisory development is to help develop supervisors to be effective leaders in the organization. Although there is currently an abbreviated training process in place, no formal manual exists to ensure all aspects of the position are addressed, there is no evaluation element, and little is devoted to leadership practices. The current training coordinator has indicated this to be a deficiency but does not have the time to devote to its completion.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. The training coordinator should create a training manual and formalized training program for new Supervisors
- II. Leadership training should be provided for all Supervisors

**Continuing Education:** Another aspect of a comprehensive employee training program is continuing education. This is an important function that will keep all staff members current about policies, procedures and technology used in the department .The most effective employee training programs make continuing education an ongoing responsibility of one person in the department.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. The training coordinator should create and implement a comprehensive, sustainable continuing education program for all personnel.

**COMMUNICATION**

**Figure 1-4 Communication Flow Survey Results: How would you rate the flow of communication in the center between the following groups:**

Groups	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Response Count
Telecom to Telecom	9.1% (5)	40.0% (22)	43.6 (24)	5.5% (3)	1.8% (1)	55
Telecom to Supervisors	3.6% (2)	21.8% (12)	45.5% (25)	21.8% (12)	7.3% (4)	55

<b>Supervisor to Supervisor</b>	1.8% (1)	20.0% (11)	<b>50.9% (28)</b>	18.2% (10)	9.1% (5)	55
<b>Administration to center personnel</b>	0.0% (0)	1.8% (1)	10.9% (6)	36.4% (20)	<b>50.9% (28)</b>	55

Communication was deemed as one of the concerns indicated in the survey, with the poorest communication being between administration and center personnel. This also provides a link to not being taken seriously when suggestions or ideas are submitted; a lack of recognition for good or poor work performance; as well as a myriad of operational issues.

Poor communications skills can be blamed for a high degree of the stress and dysfunction within the center.

The following are concerns prevalent amongst those surveyed and interviewed.

- When staff makes suggestions to improve conditions and/or operations they typically do not receive any response. Personnel want to be involved in the process. The communications center has a wealth of knowledge and experience that may be overlooked when it comes to such things as policy development and equipment acquisition. Tapping into the wealth of knowledge and skill that has developed within the organization over the years as a result of thousands of dollars in training and development just makes sense. Dismissing their recommendations creates apathy, and an uncaring attitude by management serves to perpetuate mistrust and resentment. This does not mean that management is required to incorporate all recommendations, but it does mandate a response to acknowledge the suggestion and input as to whether or not the submission is valid or invalid.
- Significant changes were recently made to chapter four of the county personnel manual. Our findings revealed there was inadequate communication of the changes and the impact those changes had on personnel. Often times the information was conveyed through an informal "grape-vine" leaving uncertainty as to the validity of the information and no avenue to ask questions of an authority figure. Employees have a desire to know why they are being required to do things and often resent the "old school" just-do-as-I say approach to management. Management needs to clearly communicate the vision, mission, and objectives of the change management effort. Helping people to understand how these changes will affect them personally. If management doesn't help with this process, people will make up their own stories, which are usually more negative than the truth. However, management should provide answers to questions only if the answer is known. Leaders destroy their credibility when they provide incorrect information or appear to stumble or back-peddle, when providing an answer. It is better to admit to not knowing an answer, and following up when the answer is known.
- Related to the lack of communication is what employees referred to as the "The Friday 4:29 Bomb." Occasionally, management would provide information about a new directive as they were walking out the door for their weekend. Supervisors themselves were often not privy to

the reason or meaning of the new directive, but, were the ones left to provide an answer to the questions being asked by staff. Management needs to communicate the reasons for the changes in such a way that people understand the context, the purpose, and the need. Management must also provide significant amounts of time for people to ask questions, request clarification, and provide input. Management must recognize that true communication is a "conversation" from which two-way and real discussion must result. It cannot be just a presentation.

- Lastly, staff infrequently sees the administration in the center, especially on the afternoon or night shifts. The resulting affect is a perceived lack of concern. Leaders should make themselves available, daily when possible, to interact with others in the workplace.

Communication is essential to inspiring others to change, incorporating new ideas, and encouraging action in others. The purpose of communication is to get your message across to others. This is a process that involves both the sender of the message and the receiver. Communication should be proactive. Communicate all that is known about a change, as quickly as the information is available. If the rumor mill is already in action, the organization has waited too long to communicate. It should be made clear that the bias is toward instant communication, so some of the details may change at a later date.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- I. Management should strive to formalize the communication processes to improve communications with all personnel in the center. All methods of communication should be utilized when appropriate instead of relying solely on electronic forms of communication.

#### **INCONSISTENCIES FROM SHIFT TO SHIFT**

**Figure 1-5 Inconsistencies Survey Results: Rate the following factors contributing to poor morale with the center.**

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
48.9% (23)	27.7% (13)	17.0% (8)	4.3% (2)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47

*Interview Question: Can you give us some examples of inconsistencies between shifts that you have personally witnessed within the center?*

One common complaint employee's voiced about supervisors is inconsistent messages – meaning one supervisor tells them one thing and another tells them something different. It is more problematic when disciplinary actions occur against one employee for their (in) action and nothing for another who engaged in the identical (in) action. Inconsistent messages by supervisors are affecting employee job performance, morale, and motivation. Employees reported being uncertain of expectations when they receive “mixed messages” from supervisors. There is an appropriately accepted cliché that supervisors, managers, administrators, and of course trainers need to be “on the same page.” Written policy moves agencies in that direction provided the policy is followed.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) serve as the written documentation of best practices and as the framework for organizational policy and structure. SOPs should identify the who, what, why, when, and how of communication center practices for employees. It is management's role to assure that SOPs are in place, communicated to employees, and consistently followed.

Supervisors and managers are responsible for ensuring smooth operation in their area of responsibility. This includes building strong teamwork, managing change, ensuring regular and clear communication and dealing with conflicts as they arise. Ultimately, a direct supervisor has the greatest impact on the employee's experience in the workplace. The same rules, expectations, and disciplinary actions need to be applied to each employee consistently throughout the communications center. When there are inconsistencies in operational standards, inequities become visible to employees who quickly complain, feel picked on, and accuse supervisors of playing favorites. When inconsistent, unreliable actions are taken and perceived capricious decisions are made by a supervisor or manager, employees lose faith and confidence and their motivation disappears.

Agency-wide training can provide part of the solution but only if trainers speak with one voice when answering the same questions, supervisors do not contradict the trainers, and the trainers' answers are what the agency leaders require.

Telecommunicators deserve clear and consistent guidance on what is expected of them. Such guidance empowers telecommunicators to work in ways that are organizationally acceptable and to avoid a wide range of pitfalls, including disciplinary actions and civil liability. In addition, it helps ensure that agencies meet their ethical and legal obligations to provide such guidance and establish accountability to professional standards.

Supervisors and managers at all levels should be using the same “rule book”; to do otherwise is unfair to staff and contrary to organizational discipline. It is difficult, if not impossible, for a telecommunicator to hit a moving target of behavioral expectations. Employees should be trained to understand that communications styles might be different among supervisors/managers due to distinctly different management styles and personalities. The bottom line is that the rules should not change at shift change.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. PSCC management should provide orientation and training to supervisors and managers regarding the importance of consistent communication to employees and between managers.
- II. Management should strive for consistent communication with employees by implementing communication tools including brief manager/supervisor meetings, communication notebooks, and use of technology (i.e. computers, texting, cell phones).

**DAY TO DAY SCHEDULING**

**Figure 1-6 Training Process Survey Results: Rate the following factors contributing to poor morale with the center:**

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
36.2% (17)	38.3% (18)	17.0% (8)	6.4% (3)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47

*Interview Question: More than ¾'s of respondents to the survey stated that they felt a different shift schedule would be beneficial to both the center and the employees. Can you give us an example of a different shift schedule that you would think would work better than the current?*

The current schedule configuration for Telecommunicators is a rotating 5 on/2 off – 5 on/3 off. The common theme was a change in shift which provided more frequent weekends off. There were a myriad of examples discussed with advantages and disadvantages to each. Two drawbacks were identified as primary concerns: (1) for a 6 on/3 off rotation the fear is being inversed for 6 - 12 hour sequential shifts which only compounds the current issue where staff are frequently being inversed all five of their shifts; and (2) whether or not 12 hours shift would be desired by the majority.

A different schedule is certainly worth exploring to determine if another option would have greater efficiency. However, due to the complexity of the issue it is recommended that it be explored in depth by management over time. It should be noted that staff had previously submitted several different schedule options to management without any feedback. The suggestion would be to include telecommunicators in the exploration and decision process.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. Management should research different shift schedule options, with involvement and input from supervisors and telecommunicators, to determine whether or not a new schedule would benefit both the center and the employees.

**MORALE**

(NOTE: There are seven (7) categories that fit under the umbrella of 'morale' included in this section: Your morale; Overall morale; Equal and Fair Treatment; Cliques within the Center; Favoritism; Lack of Respect by Co-workers; and Tension between Co-workers)

How would you rate YOUR morale at work?

**Figure 1-7 Individual Morale Survey Results**

	Response%	Response Count
5 Excellent	5.5%	3
4 Good	25.5%	14
3 Average	29.1%	16
2 Not Good	29.1%	16
1 Poor	10.9%	6

How would you rate OVERALL morale within the communications center?

**Figure 1-8 Overall Morale Survey Results**

	Response%	Response Count
5 Excellent	0.0%	0
4 Good	5.5%	3
3 Average	9.1%	5
2 Not Good	54.5%	30
1 Poor	30.9%	17

Other factors which can be correlated to the issue of poor morale:

Do you feel all personnel are treated equally and fairly?

**Figure 1-9 Treatment Survey Results**

	Response %	Response Count
Yes	32.0%	16
No	68.0%	34

Do you feel there are certain cliques that have a control factor in things that are going on in the communications center?

Figure 1-10 Cliques Survey Results

	Response %	Response Count
Yes	74.5%	41
No	25.5%	14

#### Favoritism

Figure 1-11 Favoritism Survey Results

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
44.7% (21)	17.0% (8)	27.7% (13)	8.5% (4)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47

#### Lack of Respect by Co-Workers

Figure 1-12 Respect Survey Results

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
36.2% (17)	29.8% (14)	23.4% (11)	6.4% (3)	4.3% (2)	1.00	47

#### Tension between Co-Workers

Figure 1-13 Tension Survey Results

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
21.3% (10)	25.5% (12)	34.0% (16)	14.9% (7)	4.3% (2)	1.00	47



The reasons behind the reduction in staff morale can be attributed to many factors. The most obvious came after the implementation of the revised personnel rules, reducing some of the benefits telecommunicators previously enjoyed. The primary issue regarding benefits pertains to telecommunicators no longer being compensated at time and one-half after 8 hours. Currently, employees are not compensated at time and one-half until they reach 40 hours in a work week. This issue is outside the parameters of the study, and is better addressed by those with the authority to govern them. However, when the 'Other factors' are considered it is clear that poor morale encompasses much more.

Clearly morale is an emotional issue with employees. Most employees are good workers. They show up on time each day, do well at their job, and take home the satisfaction that they have done a good days work. They feel they belong to a group that works just as hard as they do and they work for a company and management that cares about them. This is the ideal of good morale. The poor morale in the communications center means a leader or manager has not addressed the issue(s) that caused it. To deal with morale issues you must find the source and take steps to correct it. The following identify some of the issues that have contributed to poor morale.

**Leadership Issue:** Morale, whether positive or negative, starts with the leadership. There is an obvious disconnect between the center personnel and management. It is incumbent upon an organization's leader to clearly state the common goal or purpose and build belief in that purpose so everyone can work together. If there is confusion and no one is certain what the desired outcome is or what the plan might be, morale is almost certain to be low. People must feel that they are making a difference and that each person's contribution matters. The majority of personnel stated that they rarely see managers inside the Center. Management's presence would provide affirmation to staff of their value and management's concern for their welfare.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. Leadership of the communications center should work diligently to be present and have on-going conversations with employees about daily operations and long-term vision.

**Staff Conflict:** Conflict between workers is common in the workplace. When someone behaves in a way that interferes with the actions of another person, conflict arises. Verbal arguments occur where people's ideas are at odds with each other or when they feel they are not receiving adequate information to perform the function of their role (i.e. call taker vs. dispatcher). There have been instances in which staff members become upset with each other and vocalize their displeasure from opposite ends of the center floor. Some of the tension has resulted from the high turnover rate, coupled with new inexperienced call takers, still trying to find their way and at times failing to get all of the appropriate information that the dispatcher requires, resulting in conflict. These outbursts not only affect the person at the receiving end, but create tension and disruption on the center floor itself. When management fails to deal with a disruptive employee it can quickly spread negativity among the entire staff. This can be particularly problematic with teams who are dependent on each other.

Sometimes conflict can be resolved easily between the parties involved, but sometimes a supervisor must step in to manage the conflict and re-establish harmonious relationships among workers. After the resolution has occurred, the supervisor needs to follow up to make sure the solutions put into place are working, and make adjustments if necessary. This approach will show the participants that the supervisor is listening and is a dependable and effective manager, which can make future dealings with workers easier. A supervisor or manager who does nothing, by their omission is silently stating that the behavior is acceptable, and that is unacceptable.

**Favoritism:** While favoritism can be a complicated subject it basically amounts to a supervisor or manager favoring, or being perceived as favoring, a particular employee or group, thereby leaving excluded employees at an unfair disadvantage. This unfair disadvantage can lead to feelings of resentment and mistrust, resulting in decreased morale and productivity. While the organizational consequences can be quite serious, they are not necessarily the worst threats. There can be severe legal ramifications for favoritism in the workplace as well. According to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, favoritism, in certain instances, can be considered a form of discrimination actionable by law. While it is natural for certain people to have more in common than others, employees who hold positions of authority are expected to develop work relationships that are professional and free of bias. No employee should be subject to unfair treatment because of another employee's prejudice or personal inclination to favor an individual or group.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

- I. Communications Center supervisors must step in and actively resolve conflict between telecommunicators if they are disrupting the center or an individual's work performance. Supervisors should follow up to ensure that the situation is resolved.
- II. Management should immediately implement efforts to improve employee morale. Morale boosting efforts should be part of the workplace culture, resulting in a climate that fosters all of these elements – a sense of ownership among staff, validation and appreciation of quality work, and employee growth opportunities on an ongoing basis.

#### **EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT**

(NOTE: There are three (3) categories that fit under the umbrella of 'employee development' included in this section: Opportunities; Concerns taken seriously and acted on; and suggestions taken seriously.)

**Does the communication center provide adequate opportunity for employee development?**

**Figure 1-14 Employee Development Survey Results**

	Response %	Response Count
Yes	32.0%	16
No	68.0%	34

**Do you feel that your concerns are taken seriously and acted on?**

**Figure 1-15 Concerns Survey Results**

	Response %	Response Count
5 Always	0.0%	0
4 Usually	16.4%	9
3 Sometimes	36.4%	20
2 Not usually	40.0%	20
1 Never	7.3%	4

**When providing suggestions or ideas do you feel that you are taken seriously?**

**Figure 1-16 Suggestions Survey Results**

	Response %	Response Count
5 Always	0.0%	0
4 Usually	12.7%	7
3 Sometimes	38.2%	21
2 Not usually	45.5%	25
1 Never	3.6%	2

***Interview Question:** What ideas can you offer that would improve employee development opportunities within the center?*

One issue regarding employee development is the current lack of opportunity. Although the survey depicts a negative response to the question of employee development, interview answers indicated that there 'were' adequate opportunities for employee development prior to the current drop in staffing. The conclusion is that once staffing levels return to normal, these opportunities will also return.

There are also two correlating issues involving staff desire to be part of the development processes and their ideas being dismissed by management.

**What is Employee Development?** Employee development encompasses training that prepares employees to perform their present job better, as well as career development activities that prepare them for job growth and greater responsibilities. Most employee development and training programs fall under the following categories: Management Development; Career Development; Basic Skills; Professional Skills; Technical Training; and Supervisory Skills. A skilled and knowledgeable workforce positively impacts organizational performance; therefore, as employees gain experience and knowledge, it seems reasonable that there will be a corresponding correlation to the communication center's success. In addition to increasing employee competency and effectiveness, organizations that invest in the development of its employees enjoy a more motivated and committed workforce that is evidenced by increased retention, higher job satisfaction and morale, and greater productivity.

**What is the Supervisor's Role in Employee Development?** Employee development is a shared responsibility which requires collaboration between the employee and supervisor. The supervisor's role as "performance coach" includes such activities as clarifying performance and behavioral expectations, helping employees understand the organization's long and short-term goals, identifying learning opportunities, giving positive and corrective feedback, and providing necessary resources.

**What is the Employee's Role in his or her Development?** In addition to meeting current performance expectations, employees must be able to adapt to meet evolving organizational needs. For example, new skills and knowledge are often required to keep pace with technological change and new departmental procedures. Employees should be intentional about their self-development by continually evaluating the organization's needs and their own desires for growth, assessing their skills and abilities, and seeking available learning opportunities.



**What are Examples of Employee Development Activities?** The attainment of knowledge, skills and abilities can be achieved in numerous ways – many at no or low cost. Examples include the following activities:

**Events:**

- Classes, workshops, seminars
- Webinars
- Conferences

**On-the-Job:**

- Cross-training
- Challenging assignments
- Job shadowing
- Observation and demonstration
- Mentoring
- Coaching

- Buddy assignments

**Organizational:**

- Team/committee membership
- Committee leadership
- Professional organizations

**Education:**

- Degree Programs
- Certificate Programs

**Independent:**

- Reading Assignments
- Online Training

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. The communications center should re-define the role of the Lead Telecommunicator and clearly communicate the role to all personnel.
- II. The lead telecommunicator should be used as a preparatory role for the supervisor position. The expectation should be that telecoms will go to the Leads with questions and tasks that need to be addressed, and have the authority to make decisions. This also frees up the supervisor to perform more supervisory work. Leads should be considered as part of the Chain-of-command, subordinate to the Supervisors. The use of leads must be uniform on all shifts and should include the following duties and responsibilities:
  - Leads will be cross trained on all positions to assist during major incidents;
  - Leads will perform some duties of the supervisor, currently relegated only to them, such as clearing calls, signing off on warrants, activating the Amber Alert system, etc.;
  - Leads will conduct training for new telecoms and continuing education for existing telecoms;
  - Leads will be responsible for the Quality Assurance (QA) on their shift.
- III. Create focus groups utilizing existing staff and provide them with the ability to engage in the process and provide recommendations for improvement. ***People support what they help create!***
- IV.

## MANAGEMENT'S RECOGNITION OF PERFORMANCE

**Figure 1-17 Suggestions Survey Results: Rate the following factors contributing to poor morale with the center:**

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
38.3% (18)	21.3% (10)	23.4% (11)	12.8% (6)	4.3% (2)	1.00	47

*Interview Question: Management's recognition of employee performance has been cited as a significant factor to poor morale. Is the problem the recognition of good performance or bad performance? Or is it something else?*

**Recognition of Good Performance:** The response to this particular topic was "hit or miss" during the interview process with regards to positive recognition, but not unexpected when you take into consideration the generational difference of the employees. The more senior employees indicated that recognition of good performance, for the most part, is unnecessary. The feedback they receive from co-workers and supervisors is sufficient. The junior employees, especially the newest members, demonstrated a need to understand they are performing at acceptable or commendable levels and positive feedback provides assurance that they are. All telecommunicators expressed that they enjoy positive or constructive feedback when it comes from one of their user clients (officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel). Every year during Telecommunicator Month, the PSCC recognizes individuals for superior performance. Albeit this year's attendance by the center staff was less than preferred, it was symptomatic of the current environment.

The center implemented what they refer to as their "Kudos" log for co-workers and supervisors to provide positive acknowledgement of an individual or teams performance. This is well received by most employees, though some feel that the log has morphed somewhat into trivial workplace acknowledgements and not so much for its intended purpose.

However, taking into consideration the aforementioned information and the noted disparity between what was conveyed in the interviews and what is portrayed in the survey, it is obvious that over 80% rate this as somewhat important or higher. Management should understand that employee recognition is not just a nice thing to do for people. There is always room for employee reward and recognition activities that generally build positive morale in the work environment. Employee recognition is a communication tool that reinforces and rewards the most important operational outcomes created by employees. When employees are recognized effectively, the most desired actions and behaviors are reinforced and will be repeated. An effective employee recognition system should be simple,

immediate, and powerfully reinforcing. Employee recognition processes should be equally powerful for both the organization and the employee.

Five important issues must be addressed to ensure that recognition is viewed as motivating and rewarding by employees. When developing criteria to determine if a behavior or action warrants reward, the following points should be considered.

- All employees must be eligible for the recognition;
- The recognition must supply the employer and employee with specific information about what behaviors or actions are being rewarded and recognized;
- Anyone who then performs at the level or standard stated in the criteria receives the reward;
- The recognition should occur as close to the performance of the actions as possible, so the recognition reinforces behavior the employer wants to encourage;
- The process should not allow managers to "select" the people to receive recognition. This type of process will be viewed forever as "favoritism" or perceived as "it's your turn to get recognized this month." This is why processes that single out an individual, such as "Employee of the Month," are rarely effective

The criteria listed above must be applied consistently, so some organizational oversight may be necessary. People also like recognition that is random and provides an element of surprise. Conversely, too much recognition can be detrimental. For example, if you thank an employee every time they make a decision, it becomes a "given" or an entitlement and is no longer rewarding.

**Recognition of Poor Performance:** It was reported that supervisors and managers frequently avoid confrontation with those who are the most vocal and take a "hands off" approach when these employees perform poorly. Poor performance must be addressed regardless of who the subject is and disciplinary practices need to be applied consistently to all employees. When one staff member receives a sanction (verbal or written) for an infraction, but sees another staff member receive nothing for the same or similar infraction, resentment builds and results in the perception of special treatment for some.

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. Management should establish processes for recognizing both outstanding and poor performance and equally apply the processes to all employees.
- II. Conflict resolution training should be conducted to empower supervisors and managers to address issues that arise between employees in the center.



## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. FILLING OPEN 'FULL TIME' POSITIONS

*The communications center should fill open full time positions as soon as possible to reduce the necessity to inverse existing personnel to work additional hours.*

The primary problem at the communications center is a lack of staffing. Management must fill all open positions as soon as possible. The positions are approved to be filled and funding is in place. It is however critically important that management does not simply put a "warm body" in a chair. The focus must be on hiring competent and qualified staff in an expeditious manner.

A major reason for the high rate of continuous turnover is inversing (forcing personnel to work unplanned extra hours with little or no notice). The inversing problem cannot be resolved until open positions are filled and new personnel are fully trained. Continuous inversing of less tenured personnel is currently resulting in work weeks up to 60 hours. Long shifts with short rest periods are resulting in burnout of employees and mistakes while working. Mistakes made by personnel who are critical to ensuring public safety should be avoided at all cost. Brown County is placing itself in a position of extreme liability by allowing this to continue.

### B. FILLING OPEN 'PART TIME' POSITIONS

*The communications center should fill open part time positions as soon as possible to reduce the necessity to inverse existing personnel to work additional hours.*

Part time positions are currently in the table of organization and some former telecommunicators have expressed an interest in filling part time positions if the part time schedules are changed. Presently, part time employees could be forced to work up to 40 hours per week, resulting in what is essentially a full time position. Part time personnel have left the center because they either had a full time job elsewhere and couldn't work up to 40 hours a week or because they had other obligations that didn't allow them to work up to 40 hours. Part time positions should not be required to work up to 40 hours per week. A minimum number of hours should be established for part time personnel with the possibility that, at their choice, they could be allowed to work up to 32 hours per week.

Filling part time positions with former telecoms that are already trained should be a priority as it will provide immediate relief for personnel who are being continuously inversed.

### C. PERSONNEL POLICY: RECOGNIZING THE DIFFERENCE OF A 24/7 OPERATION

*Brown County should establish and implement personnel policies that recognize the differences between departments that are required to be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and those that are staffed 8 hours a day, Monday through Friday.*

Brown County personnel policies do not currently recognize the schedule of employees who work on a 24/7 operation. The county's desire to have one payroll period was given the highest priority when establishing new policies after Act 10 was implemented. The work cycle of telecommunicators does not



follow the normal Monday through Friday schedule of most employees. County policy doesn't recognize that, for example, a telecoms five day work period may start on a Wednesday and end on the following Sunday. As a result, an employee who is forced to work 12 hours on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (48 hours), plus a minimum of 8 more hours on Sunday (totaling 56 hours in a 5 day work period) would not receive appropriate overtime pay because the county ends the pay period on Saturday. The recognized downside to this recommendation is an increase in overtime pay.

Furthermore, County policy does not recognize any holidays that occur on weekends, such as Easter Sunday. The reasoning is apparently that no employees work on weekends, so there is no need to recognize the holiday. Holidays that occur during the week are paid at time and one half if an employee works, but holidays that occur on weekends are not recognized as holidays for employees who are required to work them. This certainly seems to be a double standard that is weighted against employees of 24/7 operations.

#### **D. IMPROVED POLICY & PROCEDURES AND CONSISTENT APPLICATION ACROSS SHIFTS**

*The communications center must establish written operational policies that are adhered to by all personnel and applied across all shifts to ensure consistency and uniformity in dispatching operations.*

While there are some operational policies in place, it is reported that they are often not adhered to either by telecommunicators or by supervisors. The differences reported are most evident between shifts, but also occur between different telecommunicators on the same shift. One explanation for the differences between shifts may be that different types of calls come in to the center during different shifts. For example, Day and Afternoon shifts receive more administrative calls than Night shift. How a call is entered and "dropped" (meaning it is sent from the call taker to the dispatcher to be dispatched) is handled differently from shift to shift. The differences result from one shift handling more administrative calls that are less urgent while another handles more calls that are emergent. It seems as though the volume of emergent calls versus non-emergent calls contributes to the personality of each shift.

One of the complaints from outside or "client" agencies is a lack of consistency in how routine operations are handled. Failure to adhere to an established practice could be a cause of some inconsistency, but it should be noted that this is probably not the sole cause.

Client agencies of the same disciplines (police, fire, and EMS) do not all handle incident types similarly. Communications center personnel are expected to know how each agency wants a particular incident type handled. As telecom's move from position to position, they must remember how each agency wants things done. If client agencies could standardize practices and the communications center developed more written policies, inconsistencies could be further reduced.

#### **E. INVEST IN NEW TECHNOLOGY**

*The communications center should consider investing in technologies that would ensure consistency and uniformity in dispatch operations. (ProQA)*

The communications center currently uses ProQA software for Emergency Medical Incidents. The software provides the call taker with a standardized series of questions to ask and a set of instructions to provide to the caller. The questions and instructions are driven by the callers' response to the questions. The software is available for Police and Fire applications as well. One of the most prominent issues cited by more experienced telecoms during the interviews was a lack of information gathered from the caller by less experienced call takers. This lack of information can lead to significant problems when dispatching responders to an incident. The use of ProQA software for Police and Fire incidents would standardize questions and information gathered. It would assist less experienced call takers in asking the correct questions for a wide range of circumstances.

One of the longest timeframes in the training process for new telecommunicators is call taker training. The length of time necessary for call taker training could be significantly reduced using ProQA. This is because there is a myriad of call types that come in to the center, including administrative, non-emergency, and emergency. Currently, new call takers learn what questions to ask a caller through limited classroom training and firsthand experience. It can take a significant amount of time for each call taker to experience the wide range of call types. If ProQA were implemented for all disciplines, each call type could be trained on extensively in a classroom setting before ever experiencing a real call. A call taker in training may never experience a call related to a bank robbery, however, they could have trained on it multiple times if ProQA was used.

It is probable that more experienced personnel will not support the expanded use of ProQA in the center. This is probably because it will be a major change from what they are used to. Many of the experienced telecoms feel that they know what questions to ask and they do not need ProQA to tell them. While this is probably true, it does not recognize the overall needs of the center. The implementation of ProQA is not meant to diminish the knowledge or experience of veteran telecoms, it is meant to ensure that the veterans have the best possible information in order to dispatch first responders without having to routinely ask the call taker for more information. This is also a responder safety issue.

Expanded implementation of ProQA would require Police and Fire agencies to work on standardizing some elements of their practices, though this standardization would not result in major operational changes for any agency. This standardization has already been accomplished with EMS agencies in Brown County, while it was somewhat difficult, it is possible.

If the use of ProQA is expanded in the center, it should be mandatory for all telecoms in order to provide for consistency.

#### **F. DISPATCHER QUALIFICATIONS**

*The communications center should ensure that the system for qualifying individual dispatchers to dispatch at various stations is based on the needs of the center, and not based on the willingness or desire of individual dispatchers to become qualified at a station.*

Throughout the interviews it was evident that some telecoms felt that the assignment of a telecom to a dispatch position, or the decision to train a telecom on a different dispatch position, was based on favoritism or the desire and willingness of a particular telecom. However, there does seem to be a system in place for basing these decisions on the needs of the center. Management should ensure that these decisions are indeed based on the needs of the center. It may also be beneficial for management to clarify the process to assure telecoms that there is no favoritism involved.

#### **G. FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

*The communications center should not count personnel on FMLA leave against the maximum number of people allowed off at any given time.*

The previous Director of the center issued a directive that people on FMLA leave will be counted against the maximum number of people allowed off at any given time. This directive compounded the issues among employees who had just lost a significant amount of vacation days as a result of changes to chapter four and the pending loss of comp time. Again, this directive appears to be an extreme reaction to a temporary staffing shortage. This will not be necessary if the center resumes the use of part time employees to fill open shifts and once full time vacancies are filled.

#### **H. GRADUATED PAY SCALE**

*The communications center should institute a graduated pay scale for newly hired personnel.*

Newly hired telecoms are currently paid almost as much as 20 year veterans. Starting pay should be lowered and increase as training progresses. Increases could be based on the various factors, including call taker sign off, dispatch position sign off, EMD certification, longevity, etc. A lot of money is spent on training people who wash out after several months. A graduated pay scale may result in salary savings that could fund other positions or programs in the center.

#### **I. MANDATORY DRUG TESTING**

*The communications center should establish an annual random drug testing policy for all employees and when reasonable suspicion occurs.*

Due to the safety sensitive nature of personnel working in the PSCC, drug testing is mandatory during the pre-employment process and is recommended to be a continuing process during employment on either a random basis or when there is reasonable, good faith, objective suspicion of an employee's drug or alcohol use.

##### **Policy Language Considerations:**

All safety-sensitive employees shall be subject to unannounced random drug and alcohol



testing. "Safety-sensitive employees" include those whose job responsibilities involve public safety or the safety of others. There is a legitimate expectation that public safety personnel are free from drugs and alcohol when providing these crucial services.

Supervisors should attend training in the signs and symptoms of alcohol misuse and drug abuse; understand when a test can be ordered based upon specific, contemporaneous articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors of an employee while at work or in response to reliable reports of conduct that violates this policy. Reasonable suspicion includes, but is not limited to, a supervisor's observation of one or more of the following: erratic behavior; unusual or excessive drowsiness; slurred or incoherent speech; unusually aggressive behavior; unexplained changes in mood; lack of otherwise normal manual dexterity; lack of coordination; work related accidents and/or injuries attributable to poor judgment, inattention or other behavior signaling drug or alcohol use. Supervisors should have a concurring opinion from another trained supervisor documenting the employee's conduct and behavior. If a second confirming supervisor is not available, however, one supervisor can require testing independently. Reasonable suspicion testing under this policy is authorized only if the required observations are made during, just preceding, or just after a period of the workday when the employee is required to be in compliance with these rules. Reasonable suspicion drug tests require that the employee be removed from duty until drug testing is completed and the results certified. If an employee is informed that reasonable suspicion drug testing has been authorized, the employee must provide a urine sample within twenty-four (24) hours of being informed testing has been authorized. It is the employee's responsibility to be available to provide a urine sample once he/she has been informed of the testing requirement, and failure to meet the testing requirement will result in the test's being regarded as a positive refusal to test.

#### **J. CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS**

*The communications center should establish a policy relating to employees who either have or develop a criminal history as sensitive information can be accessed by employees of the Comm. Center.*

No one can deny the importance of a thorough background investigation before hiring an employee at a 911 call center. The selection of trustworthy, competent staff is an integral part of the process. Some of the warning signs found during the background check might be a criminal record, bad driving record, bad work history, inconsistencies in the application and poor credit rating. We look for people who are well thought of in their community with a good employment record and a reputation for honesty.

However, problems can arise after the hiring process. It is important to understanding that an employee may change significantly over the course of five years. A system should be in place to ensure that a change in criminal history is not overlooked.

It is recommended that the PSCC adopt a policy requiring employees to inform management if they are involved in major violations of traffic law and criminal activity that could compromise their position. In addition, annual checks of their driver's record and criminal history through the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP) should be sufficient.

## HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF COMMUNICATIONS CENTER RELATED BOARDS

During the analysis of the 911 Communications Center, it was suggested that an Advisory Board made up of stakeholders be created to oversee the Center. Some advised that such a board had existed in the past, but the current status of it was uncertain. Little historical reference to this board was located. The below timeline outlines what was discovered as to the history of the Board:

- 1996 and Prior: There existed as stated in Chapter 36 of the Brown County Code of Ordinances, a "Brown County Public Safety Communications Board". History supplied by the County Clerk's office indicates the Board was created in September of 1993 as Chapter 35. In March of 1994, it was relocated to Chapter 36.
- Nov. 21, 1996: The Brown County Public Safety Communications Board Subcommittee adopted the recommendation that a Joint Communications Center be established and be located at the Green Bay Police Department. Also that an Operations Board be established to set operating policy and procedures, and be made up of the various County police and fire agencies heads, and that a Policy Board be established to review, modify, and recommend an annual budget for the Joint Center, members being the various City, County and Village top executives.
- Dec. 12, 1996: The Brown County Public Safety Communications Board recommends approving the Subcommittee's recommendations and is sent to the various County and Municipal Boards/Council.
- Dec. 13, 1996: The Brown County Public Safety Communications Board writes a letter to the "Chairman Brown County Board" advising their mission is complete and requests to disband. (Note: County Clerk's office unable to find any Board proceedings approving disbandment.)
- Sept. 3, 1997: The Brown County Board of Supervisors adopts the resolution to establish a Joint Communications Center.
- Sept. 15, 1999: Director of Public Safety Communications Brendon Bruss submits the countywide plan "Directional Plan for Countywide Emergency Communication Services". In that document page 10, states:
- "Advisory Board—The Director will report to an advisory board to ensure that each agency has constant contact and policy recommendation input into the operation of the department. It is suggested that the Director report to this board on a quarterly basis. The board would consist of each member of the Brown County Chiefs of Police Association, Green Bay's Fire Chief, County Rescue Director, Allouez Public Safety Director and a designated representative of the Rural Fire Chiefs Association."*

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Nov. 1999: The Intergovernmental Agreement Concerning Public Safety Communications is signed and states:  
"A. 3. There will be an advisory board established to provide guidance and customer feedback to the PSCC. The board shall consist of all members of the Brown County Chiefs of Police Association, City of Green Bay Fire Chief, City of DePere Fire Chief, Director of County Rescue, the Director of the Allouez Department of Public Safety, and a designated representative of the Brown County Rural Fire Chiefs Association. The Director of PSCC shall meet with the Board on a quarterly basis."

Dec. 8, 2000: First general organizational meeting of the Brown County Public Safety Communications Advisory Board. Minutes state the same above paragraph of the Intergovernmental Agreement Concerning Public Safety Communications.  
  
Minutes speak of organizational structure of the Advisory Board, schedule of implementation of the countywide center, and funding for those agencies that do not wish to join. Next meeting was scheduled for 2-16-01.

2001-2003: Old file of documents for the Advisory Board was located by Communications Center staff. There were scattered minutes and agendas, but does not appear to be a complete history.

2004-2008: No records of the Advisory Board could be located. It is unknown if it continued to meet as required in the Agreement.

June 2004: Creation of the Dispatch Users Group (DUG). It is thought that the creation of the DUG, and later the MABAS group, may have unofficially taken the place of the Advisory Board, but this is speculation.

2008-2009: Some Advisory Board minutes were located, primarily pertaining to the construction and move to the current location on Curry Ln.

Apr. 14, 2009: Last meeting minutes that were located for the Advisory Board. No further documentation of the Advisory Board were located to date.

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SURVEY RESULTS

Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 55  
Total Finished Survey: 50 (90.9%)

Select a page to view below or [view all pages](#):

#1

PAGE: 1

1. Are you a supervisor in the comm center?

Create Chart Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	<div></div>	7.3%	4
No	<div></div>	92.7%	51
answered question			55
skipped question			0

2. How many years have you been a telecommunicator?

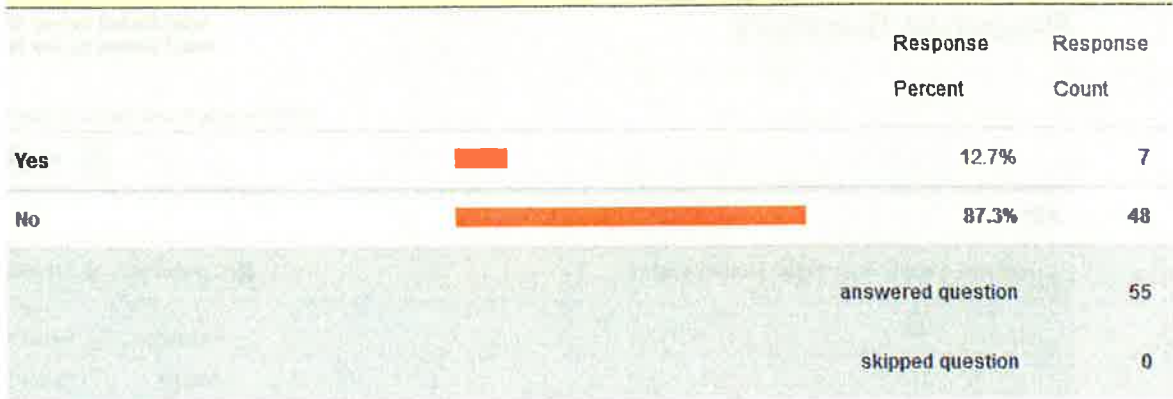
Create Chart Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
0 to 5	<div></div>	23.6%	13
6 to 10	<div></div>	30.9%	17
11 to 15	<div></div>	21.8%	12
16 to 20	<div></div>	9.1%	5
Over 20	<div></div>	14.5%	8

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### 3. Do you feel all personnel are treated equally and fairly?

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### 4. Do you feel that your concerns are taken seriously and acted on?

[Create Chart](#) [Download](#)





6. When providing suggestions or ideas do you feel that you are taken seriously? [Create Chart](#) [Download](#)



		Response Percent	Response Count
5 Always		0.0%	0
4 Usually	<div><div></div></div>	12.7%	7
3 Sometimes	<div><div></div></div>	38.2%	21
2 Not usually	<div><div></div></div>	45.5%	25
1 Never	<div><div></div></div>	3.6%	2
answered question			55
skipped question			0

7. How would you rate the flow of communication in the center between the following groups: [Create Chart](#) [Download](#)

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Rating Average	Response Count
Telecom to Telecom	9.1% (5)	40.0% (22)	43.6% (24)	5.5% (3)	1.8% (1)	1.00	55
Telecom to Supervisors	3.6% (2)	21.8% (12)	45.5% (25)	21.8% (12)	7.3% (4)	1.00	55
Supervisor to Supervisor	1.8% (1)	20.0% (11)	50.9% (28)	18.2% (10)	9.1% (5)	1.00	55
Administration to center personnel	0.0% (0)	1.8% (1)	10.9% (6)	36.4% (20)	50.9% (28)	1.00	55
answered question							55
skipped question							0

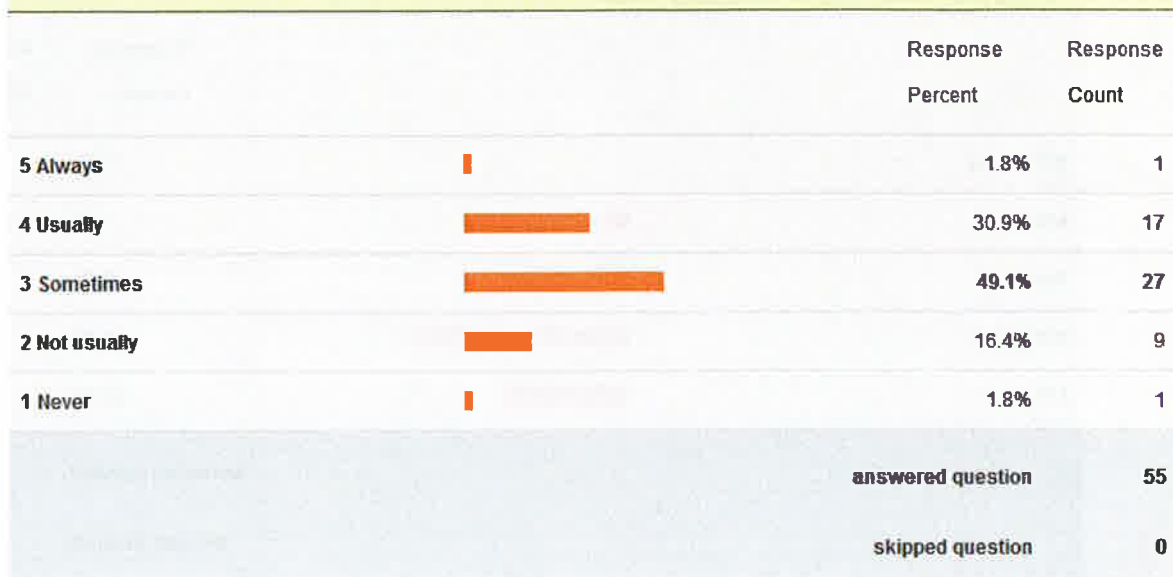
5. Do you feel there are certain cliques that have a control factor in things that are going on in the comm center?

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		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		74.5%	41
No		25.5%	14
answered question			55
skipped question			0

### 8. Does the environment within the comm center encourage teamwork?

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### 9. How would you rate YOUR morale at work?

[Create Chart](#) [Download](#)



10. How would you rate OVERALL morale within the comm center?

[Create Chart](#) [Download](#)

		Response Percent	Response Count
5 Excellent		0.0%	0
4 Good		5.5%	3
3 Average		9.1%	5
2 Not good		54.5%	30
1 Poor		30.9%	17
answered question			55
skipped question			0



11. Rate the following factors contributing to poor morale with the center.

[Create Chart](#) [Download](#)

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Low Importance	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Day to Day Scheduling	36.2% (17)	38.3% (18)	17.0% (8)	6.4% (3)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47
Inversing	61.7% (29)	31.9% (15)	6.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.00	47
Shift Picks	29.8% (14)	29.8% (14)	31.9% (15)	6.4% (3)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47
Vacation Picks	53.2% (25)	23.4% (11)	23.4% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.00	47
Comp Time	61.7% (29)	14.9% (7)	14.9% (7)	6.4% (3)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47
Training Process	40.4% (19)	38.3% (18)	21.3% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.00	47
Trade Restrictions	34.0% (16)	34.0% (16)	21.3% (10)	4.3% (2)	6.4% (3)	1.00	47
Inconsistencies from shift to shift	48.9% (23)	27.7% (13)	17.0% (8)	4.3% (2)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47
Favoritism	44.7% (21)	17.0% (8)	27.7% (13)	8.5% (4)	2.1% (1)	1.00	47
Lack of respect among co-workers	36.2% (17)	29.8% (14)	23.4% (11)	6.4% (3)	4.3% (2)	1.00	47
Physical Enviroment	6.4% (3)	17.0% (8)	25.5% (12)	25.5% (12)	25.5% (12)	1.00	47
Tension between co-workers	21.3% (10)	25.5% (12)	34.0% (16)	14.9% (7)	4.3% (2)	1.00	47
Managements recognition of employee performance	38.3% (18)	21.3% (10)	23.4% (11)	12.8% (6)	4.3% (2)	1.00	47
Other issues: <a href="#">Show Responses</a>							24
answered question							47



12. Does the comm center provide adequate opportunity for employee development?

[Create Chart](#) [Download](#)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		32.0%	16
No		68.0%	34
answered question			50
skipped question			5

13. Do you feel a different shift schedule would be more beneficial for all (the center as a whole, as well as the individual employees overall)?

[Create Chart](#) [Download](#)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		80.0%	40
No		20.0%	10
answered question			50
skipped question			5

14. What is the number one issue that you feel needs to be addressed within the comm center?

[Download](#)

	Response Count
<a href="#">Show Responses</a>	50
answered question	50
skipped question	5

1. Immediately appoint a permanent Director of the communications center.  
**This is at the discretion of the County Executive for confirmation by the full Brown County Board.**

2. Continue to honor the intergovernmental agreement that maintains the communications center as an independent agency.

**The IGA states: "The PSC is a separate Department of the County and not a subunit of any existing emergency services provider or law enforcement agency. The PSC reports directly to the Brown County Executive and operates under the policy oversight of the Public Safety Committee of the Brown County Board"**

**The IGA States: "a party may, on a minimum of 12 months written notice to the PSC Department terminate this agreement, such termination to be effective at the end of a calendar year"**

3. Re-form the Advisory Board as defined in the intergovernmental agreement and meet quarterly as intended.

**The IGA states: "There will be an advisory board established to provide guidance and customer feedback to the PSC Department. The board shall consist of all members of the Brown County Chiefs of Police Associations, City of Green Bay Fire Chief, City of De Pere Fire Chief, Director of County Rescue, The Director of the Allouez department of Public Safety, and a designated representative of the Brown County Rural Fire Chiefs Association. The Director of PSC shall meet with the Board on a quarterly basis.**

**Note: This will have to be amended to remove the Director of the Allouez Department of Public Safety.**

**The first meeting of this Board can be arranged in January 2013.**

4. Management should develop and implement an alternate system for inversing employees.

**An internal ad hoc committee has been established to begin looking at alternative shift schedules. I believe it would be premature to change the inversing process until we determine which schedule we are going to operate under and then it will take some time after implementation to determine if the new schedule has resolved our inversing issues.**

5. Management should return compensatory time under the previous 40/40 rule, but block out those months in which time off, due to vacations, are at their highest.

**If this were reinstated, the maximum cost, if all of the comp hours were paid at time and a half would be \$25,200 (based off of 2400**

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hours: 60 employees x 40 hours). The parameters outlined here would reduce that cost and past history indicates the amount of hours used would be less. In 2011, 1801 hours were used and in 2010 1585 hours were used.

6. New hire training should begin with a five to six week classroom model. On Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, we hired 6 new employees. They went through a 5 ½ week training program and the results have been positive. On January 7<sup>th</sup>, we will be hiring 4 additional employees and we will be utilizing the same model. We are currently reviewing the program and will be making minor changes from input from both the trainers and trainees.

7. Create CTO Supervisors who oversee a trainee's progress.

Our training supervisor and our telecommunications leads have been overseeing the progress of the latest recruit class. Each trainer is responsible for filling out Daily Observation Reports on their trainee. The training supervisor reviews the reports and meets with the trainees. The information is also shared with the trainees' direct report supervisor.

8. Develop and utilize task sheets during observation periods at dispatch consoles.

Daily Observation Reports are completed for each trainee.

9. Recruit and train more CTO's.

2 Telecoms are currently completing on-line CTO training.

10. Create a full time position devoted solely to training needs

We have met several times with HR and Administration to make changes to our Table of Organization. The new Table would include a *Training and Standards Coordinator*. We are currently working with HR to develop a position description and to determine what the fiscal impact will be. The costs will be offset by the elimination of the *Communications Manager Position*.

The position will primarily be responsible for all aspects of training, Quality Assurance, and standardizing policy and procedures and coordinating SOP's among agencies we dispatch.

The reorganization also includes promoting one of the supervisors to be a Lead Supervisor. They will have all of the same duties as a supervisor, but will be responsible for ensuring consistency at the supervisor level.



11. The training coordinator should create a training manual and program  
**See the answer for recommendation #10.**

12. Leadership training should be provided for all Supervisors

**One of our supervisors has been assigned the responsibilities of employee development and recognition. She is in the process of implementing a no-cost employee anniversary recognition program. She has also been working with Risk Management to identify no-cost, on-line leadership training for our supervisors and leads.**

13. The training coordinator should create and implement a comprehensive, sustainable continuing education program for all personnel.

**See the answer for recommendation #10.**

14. Management should strive to formalize the communication processes to improve communications with all personnel in the center.

**It has been our goal to improve communications by continuously soliciting employee input on important operational decisions. Ad hoc committees were created for part-time implementation and shift scheduling that included representation of telecoms, leads, and supervisors from various shifts.**

**Management has made a concerted effort to spend time out on the floor discussing issues with staff and we will be posting the minutes of our management meetings in the Center.**

15. PSCC management should provide orientation and training to supervisors and managers regarding the importance of consistent communication to employees and between managers.

**This will be part of the leadership training outlined in the response to question #12. This has also been continually brought up at management team meetings.**

16. Management should strive for consistent communication with employees by implementing communication tools including brief manager/supervisor meetings, communication notebooks, and use of technology (i.e. computers, texting, cell phones)

**This is an on-going process.**

17. Management should research different shift schedule options, with involvement and input from supervisors and telecommunicators, to determine whether or not a new schedule would benefit both the center and the employees.

**An ad hoc committee has been formed to look at alternatives to our current shift scheduling model. The committee consists of center administration, a supervisor, a lead, and a telecom from days,**

afternoons and nights. The first meeting was held on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The committee has been asked to have a recommendation completed by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

18. Leadership of the communications center should work diligently to be present and have ongoing conversations with employees about daily operations and long-term vision.

It has been our goal to improve communications by continuously soliciting employee input on important operational decisions. Ad hoc committees were created for part-time implementation and shift scheduling that included representation of telecoms, leads, and supervisors from various shifts.

Management has made a concerted effort to spend time out on the floor discussing issues with staff and we will be posting the minutes of our management meetings in the Center.

19. Communications Center supervisors must step in and actively resolve conflict between telecommunicators if they are disrupting the center or an individual's work performance.

This has been discussed in our management meetings.

20. Management should immediately implement efforts to improve employee morale.

This is an on-going effort.

21. The communications center should re-define the role of the Lead Telecommunicator and clearly communicate the role to all personnel.

As part of the reorganization, we are looking to "flatten" our organization. This will include assigning one lead to each supervisor. The lead will be required to assist the supervisor with his/her area of responsibility (i.e. scheduling, mapping, employee recognition, ProQA, etc.)

22. The Lead Telecommunicator should be used as a preparatory role for the supervisor position.

Leads will be included in any leadership training that is provided for the supervisors. As we implement our new Table of Organization, the supervisors will be responsible for mentoring their direct report leads. This will include on-going training at the supervisor desk as time allows. Our ultimate goal is to be able to have leads act as supervisors if necessary.

23. Create focus groups utilizing existing staff and provide them with the ability to engage in the process and provide recommendations for improvement.

**This is a continuous process and we will continue to utilize committees such as I have outlined for part-time implementation and scheduling.**

24. Management should establish processes for recognizing both outstanding and poor performance and equally apply the processes to all employees.

**It is the responsibility of our employee development and recognition supervisor.**

25. Conflict resolution training should be conducted to empower supervisors to address issues that arise between employees in the center.

**We are researching classes on this topic.**

Additional recommendations for substantive changes can also be found starting on page 27 of this report.

#### Additional Findings and Recommendations (Starting Page 27)

##### A. Filling Open "Full Time" Positions

**After January 7<sup>th</sup>, we will be down 1 full-time position. We started the recruitment for an eligibility list in November. The application period closed Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, we have begun testing and interviews will be starting Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. The list should be established by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**Additionally, a lead was promoted to supervisor and will begin her new position on January 21<sup>st</sup>.**

**We posted for the vacated lead position and we are anticipating have that filled internally by the end of January 2013.**

##### B. Filling Open "Part-Time" Positions

**We hired 3 former employees to fill part-time positions. That leaves us with 1 vacant part-time position. We have a trained LTE that is interested in that position.**

**After January 7<sup>th</sup>, we will be down 1 full-time position. We started the recruitment for an eligibility list in November. The application period closed Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, we have begun testing and interviews will be starting Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. The list should be established by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>.**

##### C. Personnel Policy: Recognizing the Difference of a 24/7 Operation

**There has been a cost savings of approximately \$140,395 YTD 2012.**

D. Improved Policy and Procedures and Consistent Application Across Shifts  
This will be the role of the new Training and Standards Coordinator

E. Invest in New Technology  
Once the radio project is complete, it will be the role of the Communications Specialist to research emerging technology for the center.

F. Dispatcher Qualifications  
This will be the role of the new Training and Standards Coordinator.

G. Family Medical Leave Act  
We no longer count FMLA against the max number of people allowed off at a given time.

H. Graduated Pay Scale  
It is our understanding that this will be addressed in the Class and Comp study that is being completed by HR.

I. Mandatory Drug Testing  
Has not been discussed

J. Criminal History Checks  
Has not been discussed